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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: GOJ PUBLICLY SUPPORTS ABU MAZEN

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale, Reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: King Abdullah and the GOJ registered strong support for Abu Mazen and the new government of Salam Fayyad. Local media were largely supportive of preserving the legitimacy of Palestinian Authority institutions, although some blamed the international community and Arab states for forcing Hamas into confrontation. Establishment figures such as the King, FM, government spokesman, and a retired diplomat privately believe Hamas' popular image among Jordanians has plummeted, and that the local Muslim Brothers are suffering as well by association. The MB issued contradictory statements, but one was defensive and distanced itself from Hamas' actions. End summary.

GOJ PUBLICLY SUPPORTS NEW GOVERNMENT  
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[¶2.](#) (U) Following his June 14 phone conversation from London with Abbas, Petra News reported that the King warned against continued Palestinian infighting, the breakdown of security and the grave consequences for the future of the Palestinian cause. He called for safeguarding the Palestinian Authority, and preventing the collapse of institutions which serve the Palestinian people. Earlier that day, in a statement at a joint press availability in Budapest with the Hungarian President, King Abdullah expressed his deep concern that finding a comprehensive solution to the peace process was in increasing jeopardy. He urged the international community to catalyze the Palestinians and Israelis to resume negotiations and find such a solution. Note: These statements were made prior to the declaration of a state of emergency and formation of the new government. End note.

[¶3.](#) (U) Soon after Abbas' declaration, the GOJ issued strong statements to support him, his declaration of a state of emergency and subsequent formation of a new government. On June 15, government spokesman Nasser Joudeh said, "Jordan is committed to supporting this legitimacy and protecting the Palestinian National Authority and its Chairman Mahmoud Abbas." On June 17, Prime Minister Marouf Al-Bakhit reiterated Jordan's position. During a briefing with the Parliament's Arab and International Affairs Committee, he "wished the newly formed Palestinian emergency government all success in carrying out its mission to restore order and security in troubled Palestinian areas." Local media reported that King Abdullah called for "swift international action to help Palestinians overcome their difficult economic situation," during a phone call with Secretary Rice on June [¶16.](#)

MEDIA COMMENTARY  
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[¶4.](#) (SBU) Major pro-government Arabic dailies supported Jordan's position. Arabic daily Al-Dustour's editorial said "Abbas' formation of a government, led by Salam Fayyad, is a sensitive, but necessary step to try to stop the

"assassinations and crimes that are now committed against innocent people in Palestinian society." Arabic daily Al-Rai concurred, urging Palestinians to end this serious situation. "Jordan is committed to supporting Palestinian legitimacy and the need to protect and support the Palestinian National Authority and support its President," read the editorial.

15. (SBU) Individual editorials also rejected Hamas' actions in Gaza, but some asserted that Hamas was forced into a corner. "Had the U.S. been sincere in its support for Abbas, as its Secretary of State claimed yesterday, it would have done something on the ground and armed Abbas with concrete realities, the least of which is lifting the unjust siege on Palestinian people," wrote Sami al-Zubaydeh on June 16 in Al Rai. Others blamed Hamas, saying it has "done a significant service for the Israeli occupation" and "Hamas has lost its legitimacy." Political cartoons focused on the damage to the Palestinian cause from self-inflicted wounds, although in some instances suggested Israel and the U.S. instigated the fight.

16. (SBU) Several editorials expressed concern about the formation of two separate Palestinian entities. "Between the two entities (Gaza and the West Bank) there is more than one party, and more than one geography and popular mood," wrote Tariq Masarwah in Al-Rai. Hasan al Bararai wrote, "the most serious problem (is a Palestinian split between Gaza and the West Bank."

#### JORDANIAN PUBLIC - MIXED FEELINGS

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17. (C) Jordanian contacts expressed mixed feelings of regret for the Palestinian infighting and concern for the future.

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Many Post contacts felt that Hamas' presence in government was under fire from the world, other Arabs, Israel and Fatah. Hamas was forced into a position to surrender, seek confrontation now, or await confrontation after Fatah security forces were strengthened by U.S. financial support.

18. (C) At the same time, many Jordanians expressed disgust at the actions of Hamas gunmen. The King is of the private opinion that TV images of Hamas gunmen stomping on photos of Arafat, among other images, played against Hamas locally. The Foreign Minister told Ambassador that a prominent Islamist legislator had said privately that Hamas' action, including images of violence and barbaric acts, was going over badly with Jordan's public. He admitted it was affecting the reputation of Jordan's Islamists, who are associated with Hamas in many people's minds. Other establishment contacts, such as the government spokesman and a prominent retired diplomat, told the Ambassador over the weekend that at least in the short-run, the local Islamists' popularity would suffer by association with Hamas.

19. (C) All of these figures - including the Foreign Minister and palace officials - stress that swift economic and financial support for the Fayyad government, and renewed diplomatic effort, will be crucial to show that the course of moderation brings results relevant to Arab needs. But they also caution that the U.S. should guard against statements that appear to welcome Hamas' action as having provided the political and diplomatic opportunity that in fact now exists, or reflect satisfaction with the separation of Gaza and ignore the humanitarian situation there.

110. (C) Government spokesman Joudeh noted to Ambassador that de facto separation of Gaza from the West Bank inevitably reignited discussion of Jordan's relationship with the West Bank, a taboo, he said, that was best left untouched. At least one editorial also cautioned against the concept of confederation.

¶11. (C) With many elites already convinced that Iranian actions are undercutting the interests of the Sunni Arab world, Hamas' violent action directed against Palestinian institutions and Fatah is providing them further evidence of Iran's overall threat.

#### ISLAMISTS PREDICTABLY BACK HAMAS

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¶12. (U) The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan reacted defensively. In an official statement on June 17, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood blamed "international and regional support for the Zionist regime" for Palestinian infighting. However, the Brotherhood also affirmed that "...true Palestinian consensus ...and reiterating the legitimacy of President Mahmoud Abbas and the preservation of Palestinian law" was the way to address the Palestinian situation. Zaki Bani Irsheid, the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), said the situation was an "important step to get rid of quarters that were backed by Israel and the United States...They are a group headed by Mohammad Dhalan, the chief of the Palestinian Preventive Security apparatus." Bani Irsheid did, however, call on Hamas to "use the logic of pardon before applying the law on those whom he considered "guilty".

#### CALLS TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS

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¶13. (S) Columnist Fahd Al Khitan wrote that some Jordanians had called for postponing parliamentary elections -- expected in late 2007 -- in light of the chaos in the region. Comment: The King remains strongly committed to holding elections despite the counsel by some around him to postpone them.

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